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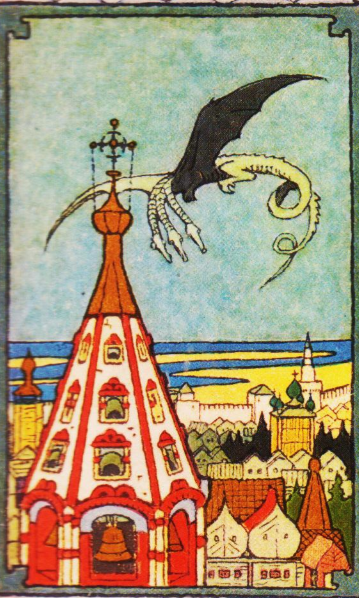
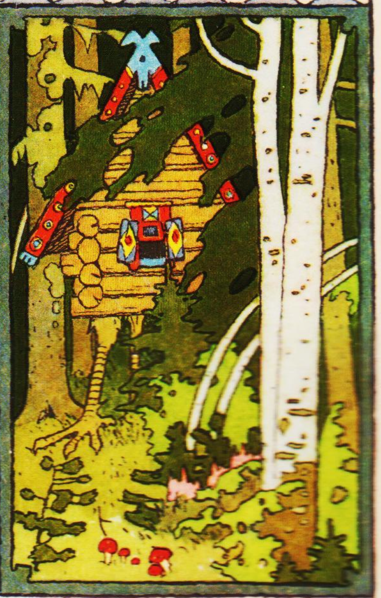
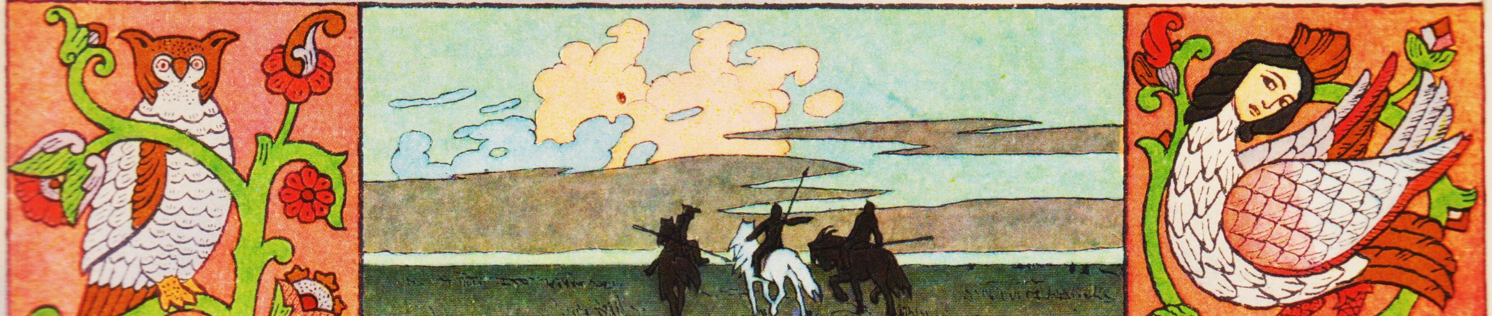


МАРЬЯ МОРЕВНА

MARYA MOREVNA





РИСУНКИ

И.Я. БИЛИБИНА.

Retold in English by Irina Zheleznova

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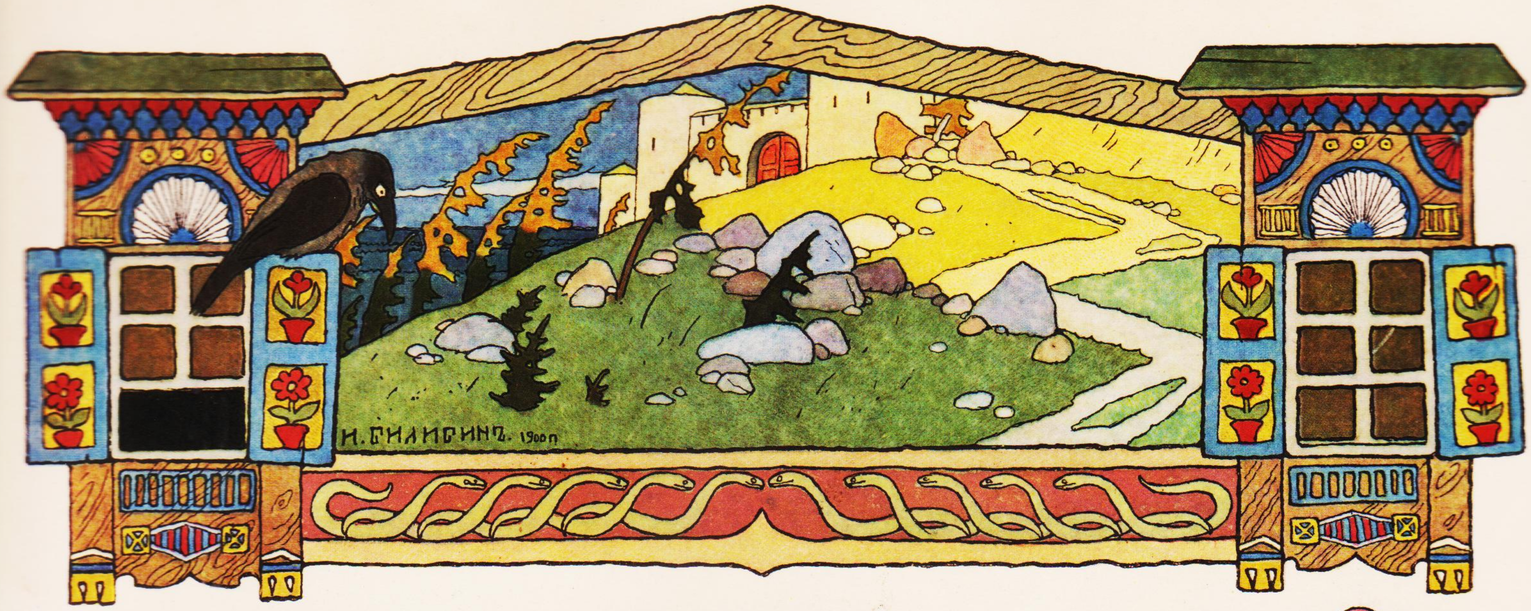


Марья Моревна

MARYA MOREVNA

In a certain tsardom, in a certain realm there once lived the son of a Tsar, Tsarevich Ivan by name, and his three sisters, Tsarevna Marya, Tsarevna Olga and Tsarevna Anna.

One day Tsarevich Ivan went with his sisters for a walk in their green garden.

All of a sudden a black cloud came over the sky.

"Come, sisters, let us go home," said Tsarevich Ivan.

No sooner did they reach the palace than the thunder crashed, the ceiling was rent in two, and a Falcon came flying in. He struck the floor, turned into a tall and handsome youth and said:

"I have come to ask for the hand of your sister Tsarevna Marya, Tsarevich Ivan."

"It is for my sister to say if she will have you or not."

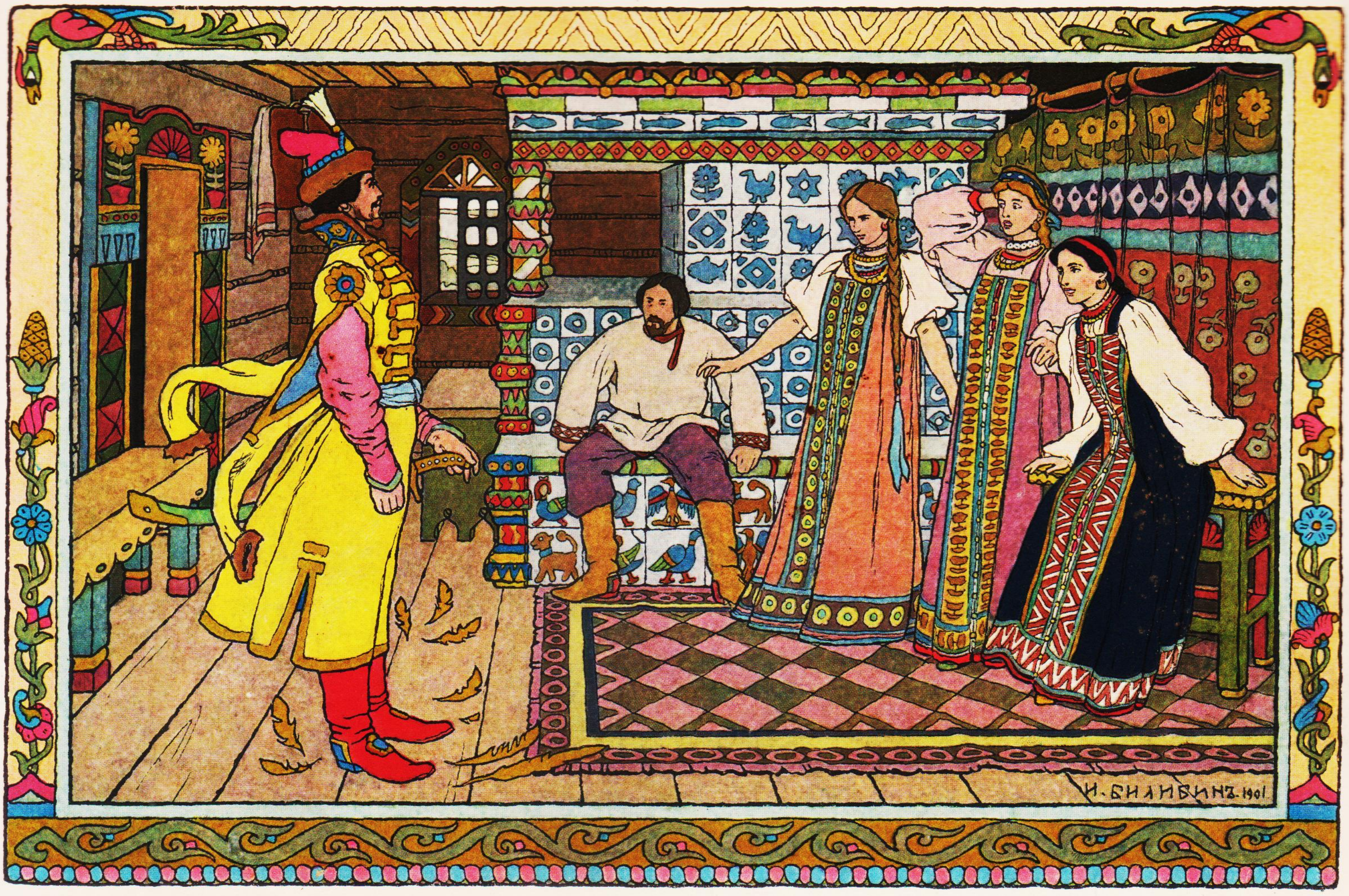
And Tsarevna Marya being willing, the Falcon married her and carried her off to his tsardom.

A year went by, Tsarevich Ivan and his two sisters went for a walk in the green garden, and again a black cloud came over the sky.

"Come, sisters, let us go home," said Tsarevich Ivan.

No sooner did they reach the palace than the thunder crashed, the ceiling was rent in two, and an Eagle came flying in. He struck the floor and turned into a tall and handsome youth.

"Good morrow, Tsarevich Ivan," said he. "I have come to ask for the hand of Tsarevna Olga."



"It is for my sister to say if she will have you or not," said Tsarevich Ivan.

And Tsarevna Olga being willing, the Eagle married her and carried her off to his tsardom.

Another year went by, and Tsarevich Ivan and his youngest sister were out walking in their green garden when a black cloud came over the sky.

"Let us go home, sister!" said Tsarevich Ivan.

No sooner did they reach the palace than the thunder crashed, the ceiling was rent in two, and a Raven came flying in. He struck the floor and turned into a tall and handsome youth.

"I have come to ask for the hand of Tsarevna Anna," said the Raven.

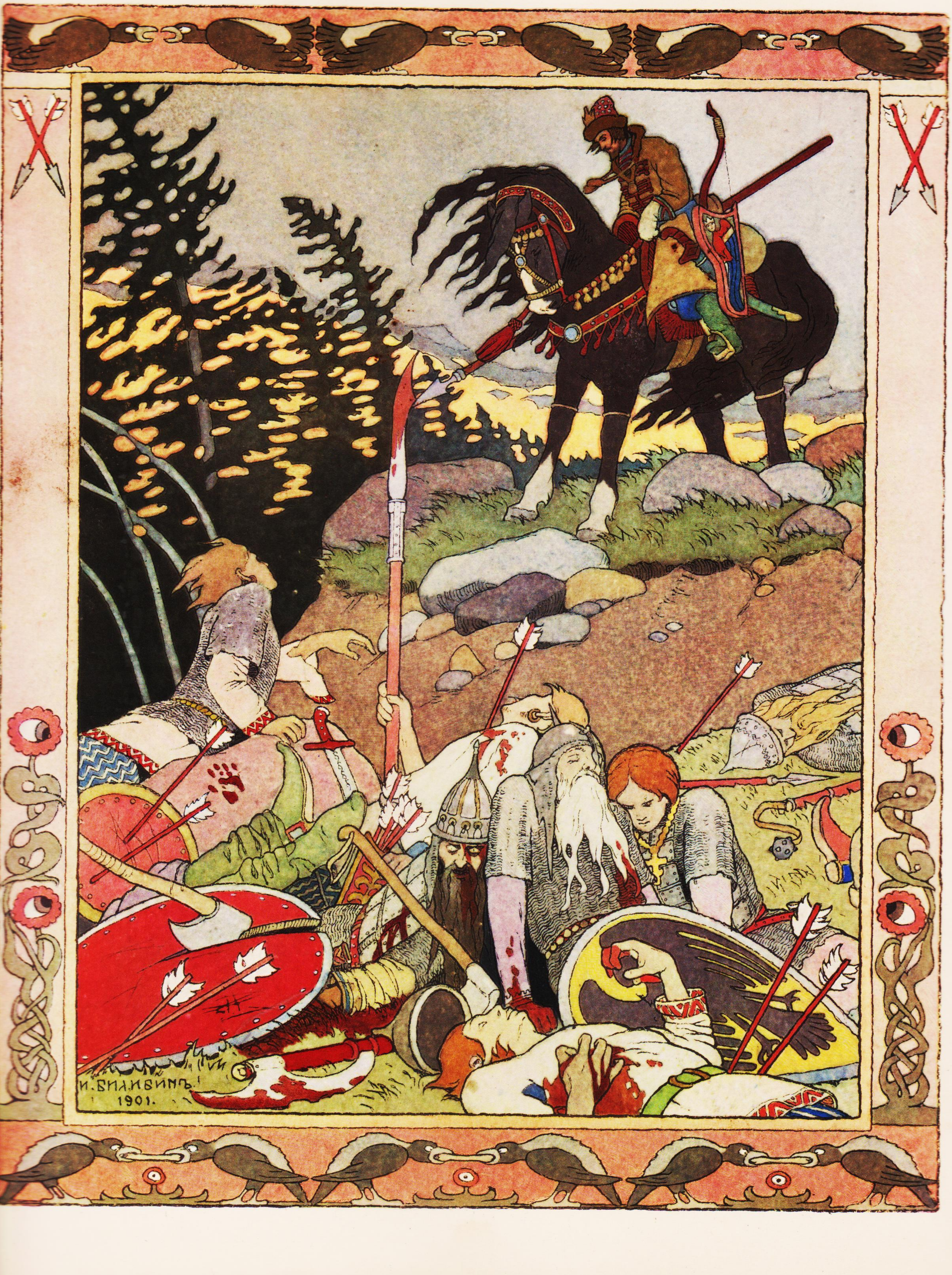
"It is for my sister to say if she will have you or not."

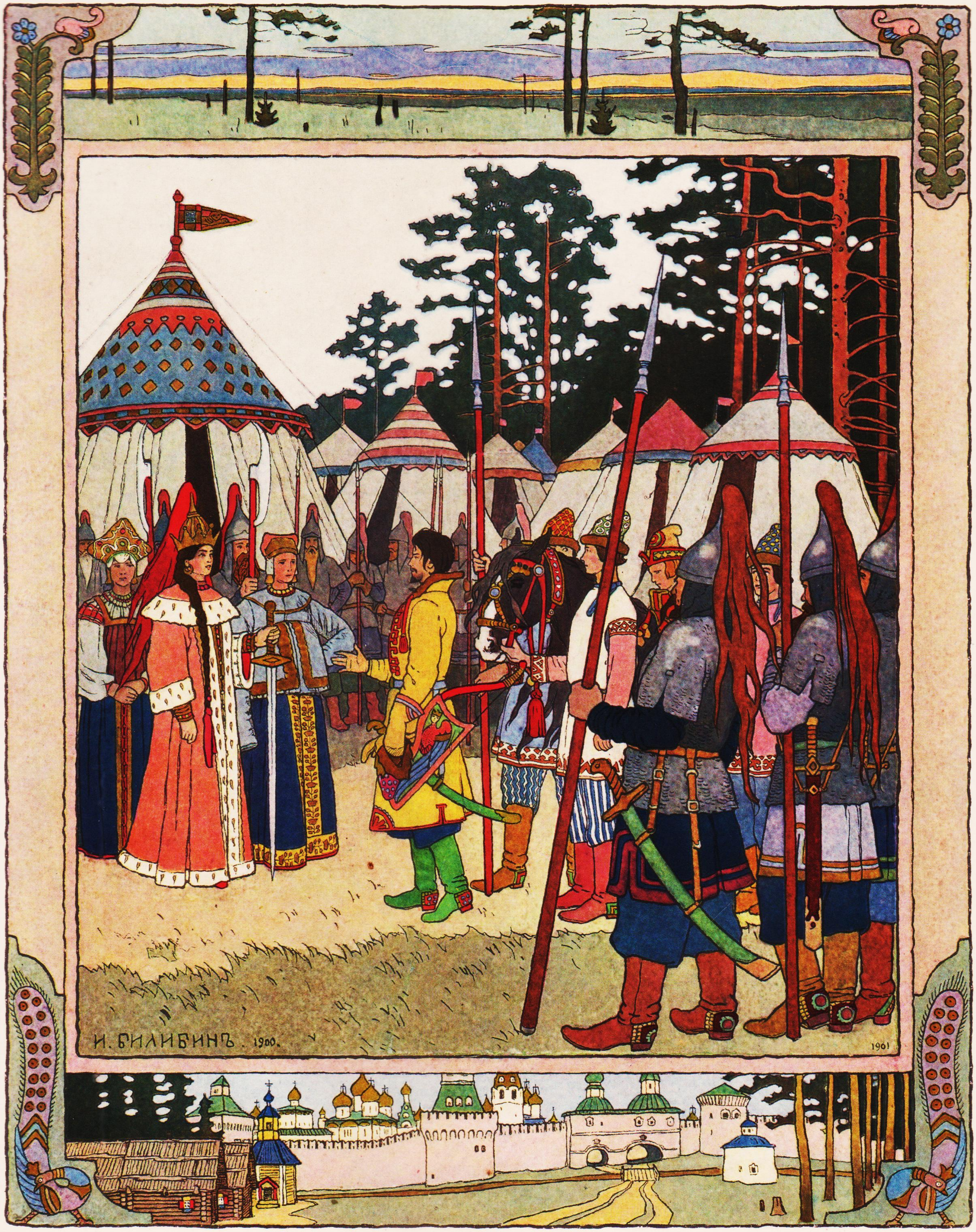
And Tsarevna Anna being willing, the Raven married her and carried her off to his tsardom.

Tsarevich Ivan was left all by himself. He lived alone for a whole year, and he missed his sisters very much.

"I think I shall go to see my sisters," said he.

Off he set on his way, he rode and he rode, and by and by he came to a field where a whole host of warriors lay routed and dead.


И. БИЛИБИНЪ.
1901.


И. БИЛИБИНЪ. 1900.
1901

"If there is a man left alive among you, let him answer me!" Tsarevich Ivan called out. "For I wish to know who it was that vanquished this mighty host."

And the only living man there replied:

"This whole host was vanquished by Marya Morevna the Lovely Tsarevna."

Tsarevich Ivan rode on. After a time he came upon a number of white tents set up in a field, and there, coming out to meet him, was Marya Morevna.

"Good morrow, Tsarevich," said she. "Do you come of your own free will?"

Said Tsarevich Ivan in reply:

"Brave men and strong like myself never go anywhere but of their own free will."

"Well, then, be my guest and bide in my tent a while."

This Tsarevich Ivan was glad to do. For two days and two nights he was Marya Morevna's guest, and so well did they like one another that they were married before the third day had passed.

Tsarevich Ivan went with Marya Morevna the Lovely Tsarevna to her tsardom and they lived there for a time till one day Marya Morevna bethought her of setting out for the wars again. Before leaving, she showed Tsarevich Ivan a room the door of which was locked fast and said:

"You can go everywhere else but mind that you never look into this one room."

But Tsarevich Ivan did not heed Marya Morevna. As soon as she had left he hurried to the room and opened the door, and what did he see but Koshchei the Deathless hanging there, chained to the wall with twelve chains.

"Take pity on me, Tsarevich Ivan, and give me some water to drink before I die of thirst," said Koshchei the Deathless in pleading tones. "For ten years have I been held here and such have been my torments as cannot be described."

Tsarevich Ivan gave him a whole pailful of water, and Koshchei drained it and began to plead for more.

Tsarevich Ivan brought him a second pail of water, and he drained it and asked for more. But when he had finished the third pailful he got back all of his former strength, and he shook his chains and broke all twelve of them.

"Thank you, Tsarevich Ivan," said Koshchei the Deathless. "Now you will never see Marya Morevna again."

He flew out of the window as swiftly as a whirlwind, caught up with Marya Morevna, and, seizing her, carried her off with him.

Tsarevich Ivan wept long and bitterly and then he dried his tears and set off to seek Marya Morevna.

A day passed by, and a second, and at dawn on the third day Tsarevich Ivan saw a beautiful palace before him. Beside the palace there grew an oak, and on its bough there perched a Falcon. The Falcon flew off the oak, struck the ground and turned into a handsome youth.

"Ah, my own dear brother-in-law, I am indeed glad to see you!" he cried.

He called his wife, and Tsarevna Marya ran out to meet her brother. She welcomed him joyously, asked after his health and began telling him how she lived and fared.

Tsarevich Ivan spent three days with her and her husband and then he said:

"I cannot bide with you longer. I must go to seek my wife, Marya Morevna the Lovely Tsarevna."

"Leave your silver spoon with us that we may know how you fare," said the Falcon.

Tsarevich Ivan left his silver spoon with them and off he set on his way. He rode for a day, and another, and at dawn on the third day he saw a palace even more beautiful than the Falcon's. Beside the palace there grew an oak, and on its bough there perched an Eagle.

The Eagle flew off the tree, and, turning into a handsome youth, said:

"Come, Tsarevna Olga, get up, for our own dear brother is here!"

Tsarevna Olga came running out of the palace. She welcomed her brother joyously, asked after his health and began telling him how she lived and fared.

Tsarevich Ivan spent three days with them and then he said:

"I cannot bide with you longer. I must go to seek my wife."

"Leave your silver fork with us," said the Eagle.

Tsarevich Ivan left his silver fork with them and off he set on his way.

He rode for a day, and another, and at dawn on the third day he saw a palace which far surpassed the first two in beauty and splendour. Beside the palace there grew an oak, and on its bough there perched a Raven.

The Raven flew off the oak, and, turning into a handsome youth, cried:

"Make haste and come, Tsarevna Anna, for our own dear brother is here!"

Tsarevna Anna came running out of the palace. She welcomed Tsarevich Ivan joyously, asked after his health and began telling him how she lived and fared.

Tsarevich Ivan spent three days with them and then he said:

"I cannot bide with you longer, for I am off to seek my wife."

"Leave your silver snuff-box with us," said the Raven.

Tsarevich Ivan left his silver snuff-box with them and went on his way.

A day passed by, and another, and on the third day Tsarevich Ivan finally found his own dear wife.

Marya Morevna threw her arms around Tsarevich Ivan, burst into tears and said:

"Ah, Tsarevich Ivan, why did you not listen to me but opened the room where Koshchei the Deathless was kept?"

"Forgive me, Marya Morevna, and let us be off while Koshchei the Deathless is nowhere to be seen."

And away the two of them rode together.

Now, Koshchei the Deathless was out hunting, and it was evening by the time he turned his way homewards. On he rode, and his horse stumbled under him.

"Why do you stumble, you old bag of bones?" he asked.

Said the horse in reply:

"Tsarevich Ivan has carried off Marya Morevna."

"Do you think we can catch up with them?"

"If we were to sow some wheat, wait till it ripened, reap and thresh it and grind it into flour, bake five ovenfuls of bread, and not go after them till we had eaten it all up, we would still catch up with them."

So Koshchei the Deathless sent his horse into a gallop and he soon caught up with Tsarevich Ivan.

"I'll forgive you this first time," said he, "but if you dare to go against me again, I'll hack you to pieces."

And off he rode, taking Marya Morevna with him.

Tsarevich Ivan wept and sobbed, but then he dried his tears and went back again for Marya Morevna. Koshchei the Deathless was out hunting, and she was alone.

"Come with me, Marya Morevna!" said Tsarevich Ivan. "Even if Koshchei the Deathless overtakes us we will have spent an hour or two together!"

They rode away, and by and by Koshchei the Deathless turned his way homewards.

"Why do you stumble?" asked he of his horse. "Is it that you sense some misfortune?"

"Tsarevich Ivan has carried off Marya Morevna again!"

"Do you think we can catch up with them?"

"If we were to sow some barley, wait till it ripened, reap and thresh it, brew beer out of it, drink till we were drunk and not go after them till we had slept it off we would still catch up with them."

Koshchei the Deathless put his horse into a gallop and soon caught up with Tsarevich Ivan. He took Marya Morevna away from him and carried her off.

Tsarevich Ivan wept and sobbed and then he dried his tears and went back again for Marya Morevna. Koshchei the Deathless was away as before and she was quite alone.

"Come with me, Marya Morevna!" said Tsarevich Ivan. "I cannot live without you."

They rode away together, and by and by Koshchei the Deathless turned his way homewards.

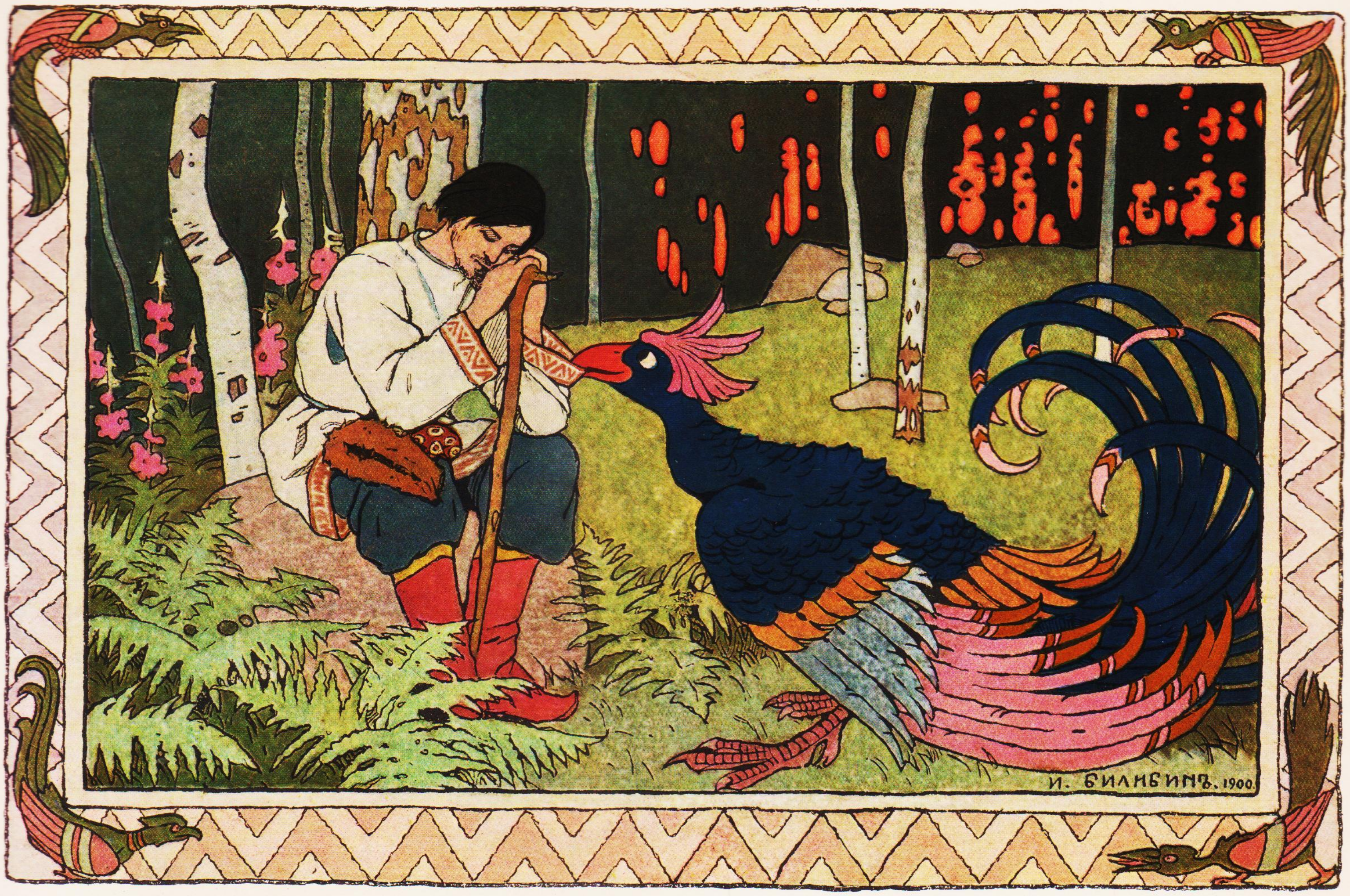
"Why do you stumble?" asked he of his horse. "Is it that you sense some misfortune?"

"Tsarevich Ivan has carried off Marya Morevna again!"

Off went Koshchei the Deathless after Tsarevich Ivan, and, catching up with him, hacked him to pieces. He put the pieces in a tarred barrel, bound the barrel with iron hoops and threw it in the blue sea. And he got on his horse and rode away, taking Marya Morevna with him.

Now, at this selfsame time the silver things Tsarevich Ivan had left with his brothers-in-law turned dark and tarnished, and they at once knew that he had met with misfortune.

Down dropped the Eagle to the blue sea. He seized the barrel and carried it out on to the shore.


И. БИЛИБИНЪ. 1900.

The Falcon flew after living water and the Raven flew after dead water, and the two of them came flying back to where the Eagle was waiting for them. They broke up the barrel, took out the pieces into which Tsarevich Ivan's body had been hacked and put them all together properly.

The Raven sprayed the pieces with the dead water, and they grew fast to one another; the Falcon sprayed them with the living water, and Tsarevich Ivan rose with a start and said:

"Oh, what a long sleep I have had!"

"But for us you would have slept longer," said his brothers-in-law. "And now come and be our guest."

"No, my brothers, I must go to seek Marya Morevna."

And off he went.

He found Marya Morevna and said to her:

"Ask Koshchei the Deathless where it was he got himself such a fine horse."

Marya Morevna bided her chance and then asked Koshchei the Deathless about his horse.

Said Koshchei the Deathless:

"Beyond the Thrice-Nine Lands, in the Thrice-Ten Tsardom there lives

Baba-Yaga the Witch. She lives in the forest beyond the Flaming River and she has a fine herd of horses. I pastured them for her, and she gave me one in reward."

"How did you cross the Flaming River?"

"With the help of my magic kerchief."

Marya Morevna passed on to Tsarevich Ivan everything Koshchei the Deathless had said, and she carried off Koshchei's magic kerchief and gave it to him.

Tsarevich Ivan made for Baba-Yaga's house. He walked for a long, long time and was tired and hungry, too, when he came across a strange bird and her brood.

"I think I shall eat one of the chicks," said Tsarevich Ivan.

"Do not touch my chicks, Tsarevich Ivan," said the bird in pleading tones. "Who knows but you may have need of me some day!"

Tsarevich Ivan did not touch the chicks but walked on.

By and by he came upon a bee-hive in the forest.

"I think I shall take some honey," said he.

"Do not touch my honey, Tsarevich Ivan," said the bee queen. "Who knows but you may have need of me some day!"

Tsarevich Ivan did not touch the honey but walked on.

By and by he came across a lioness and her cub. He wanted to kill the cub and eat it, but the lioness spoke up in pleading tones and said:

"Do not touch my cub, Tsarevich Ivan. Who knows but you may have need of me some day!"

Tsarevich Ivan did not touch the cub but walked on.

By and by he came to Baba-Yaga's house. There were twelve poles round it and eleven of them were crowned with human heads.

"What brings you here, Tsarevich Ivan?" asked Baba-Yaga.

"I have come to take up service with you, Grandma."

"Very well, Tsarevich Ivan. You shall serve me for three days. If you keep my horses safe, I will give you one in reward. If you don't, then your head will crown the last pole of the twelve."

And Baba-Yaga set Tsarevich Ivan to pasturing her horses.

The horses lifted their tails and away they ran across the meadows, and before Tsarevich Ivan could raise his eyes to see where they went they were gone out of sight. Tsarevich Ivan sorrowed and wept, and then he sat down on a stone and fell asleep.

The sun was setting when the strange bird came flying up.

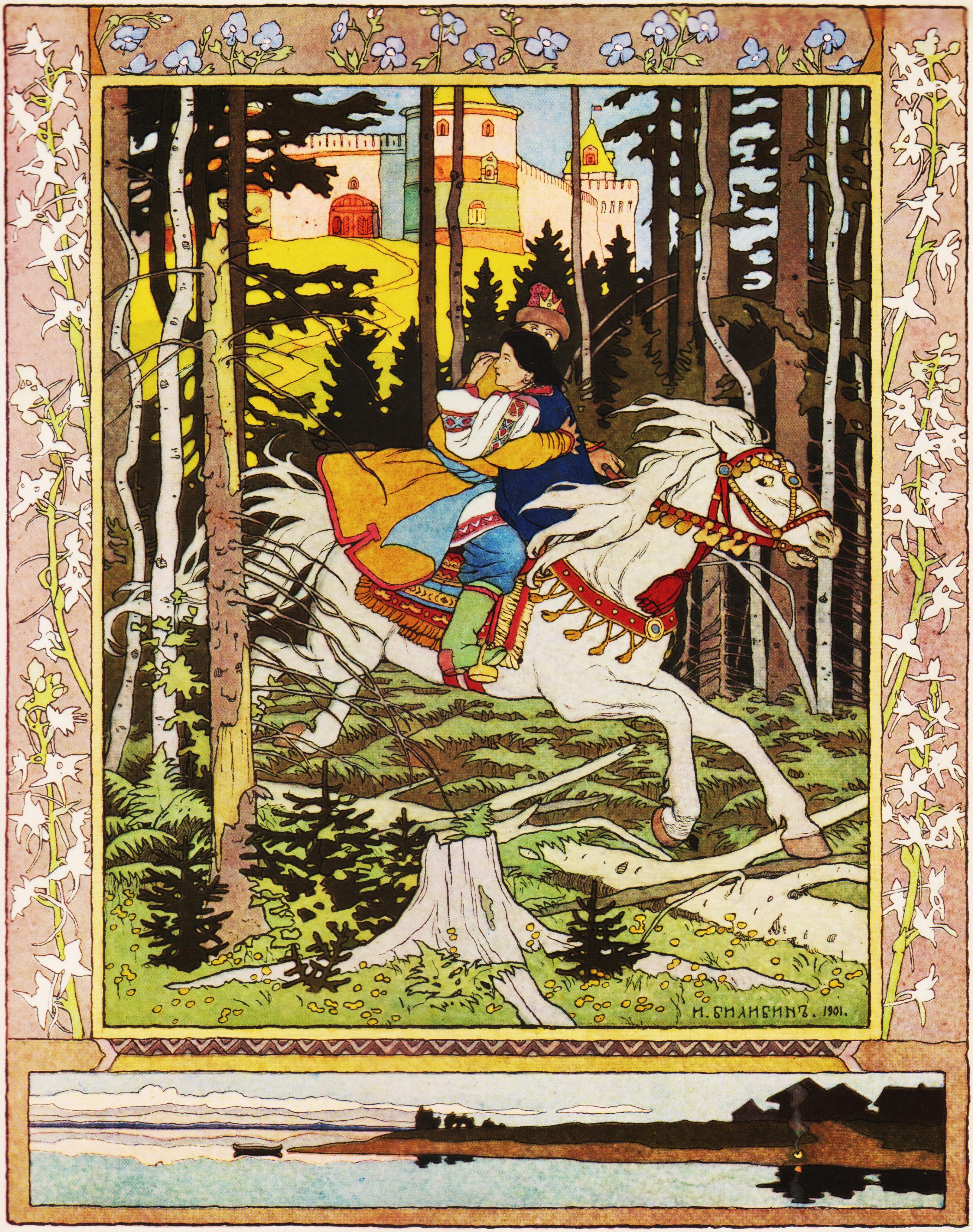
"Wake up, Tsarevich Ivan!" said she. "The horses are all back in their stalls."

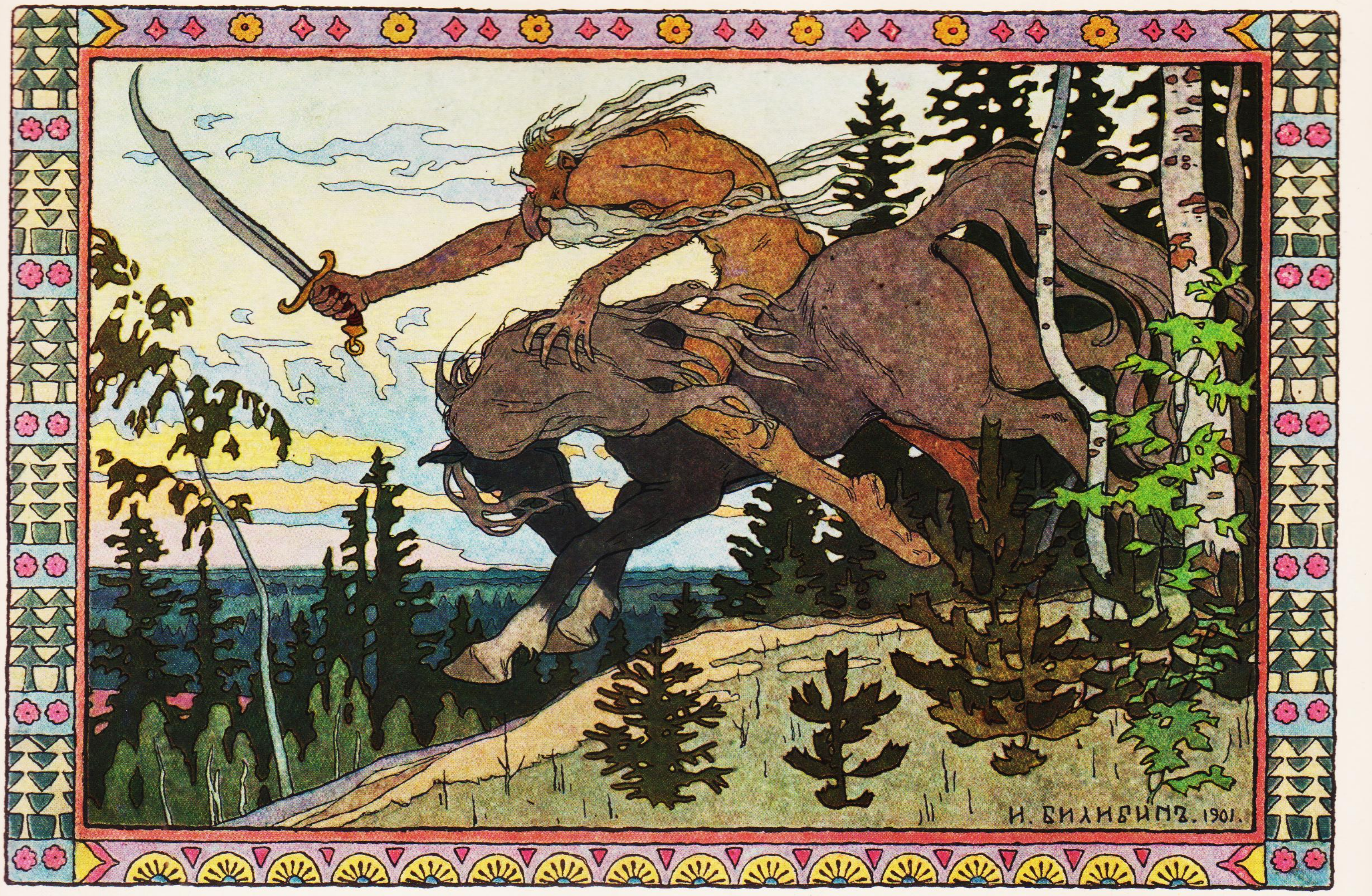
Tsarevich Ivan rose and went to Baba-Yaga's house where he found her shouting at the horses and scolding them.

"Why did you come back to your stalls?" she cried.

"What else could we do? The birds came flying and they nearly put out our eyes."

"Well, don't run in the meadows tomorrow but scatter in the forests."


И. БИЛИБИНЪ. 1901.


И. БИЛИБИНЪ. 1901.

On the next day Tsarevich Ivan drove the horses out to pasture, and they at once lifted their tails and ran off into the forests. Tsarevich Ivan wept and sorrowed, and then he sat down on a stone and fell asleep.

The sun was setting when the lioness came running.

"Wake up, Tsarevich Ivan!" said she. "All the horses are back in their stalls."

Tsarevich Ivan rose and went to Baba-Yaga's house where he found her scolding the horses harder than ever.

"Why did you come back to your stalls?" she cried.

"What else could we do? The fiercest beasts came running and they nearly tore us to shreds!"

"Well, you must hide in the blue sea tomorrow."

On the next day Tsarevich Ivan drove the horses out to pasture, and they at once lifted their tails, and, running into the blue sea, stood knee-deep in the water.

Tsarevich Ivan wept and cried, and then he sat down on a stone and fell asleep.

The sun sank beyond the forest, and the bee queen came flying up.

"Wake up, Tsarevich Ivan!" she called. "All the horses are back in their stalls. Only mind, when you get back to the house do not show yourself to Baba-Yaga but go to the stable and hide behind the crib. There is a mangy colt there. Take him, and in the deep of night leave the house."

Tsarevich Ivan went to Baba-Yaga's house, he stole into the stable and crouched behind the crib. And all the while Baba-Yaga was shouting at the top of her voice and berating her horses.

"Why did you come back to your stalls?" she cried.

"What else could we do? Swarms of bees came flying and they stung us all over."

Baba-Yaga went to bed and fell asleep, and Tsarevich Ivan saddled the mangy colt and rode to the Flaming River. He waved the magic kerchief thrice, and lo! — there, spanning the river, was a fine, tall bridge.

Tsarevich Ivan rode across and waved his kerchief twice, and instead of the fine, tall bridge there appeared a low, narrow one.

Baba-Yaga woke up, and, seeing that her mangy colt was gone, rushed off in pursuit.

She flew to the Flaming River and started across the bridge. She reached its middle, but the bridge broke down under her, and Baba-Yaga fell in the river and was never seen again.

Tsarevich Ivan pastured his colt in the lush green meadows, and the colt grew into a strong and handsome horse.

After that Tsarevich Ivan rode to the house of Koshchei the Deathless, and out ran Marya Morevna and threw her arms round his neck.

"Come away with me," said Tsarevich Ivan. "Koshchei the Deathless will find it hard to overtake us, for I have a horse that flies like the wind."

They got on the horse's back and rode away.

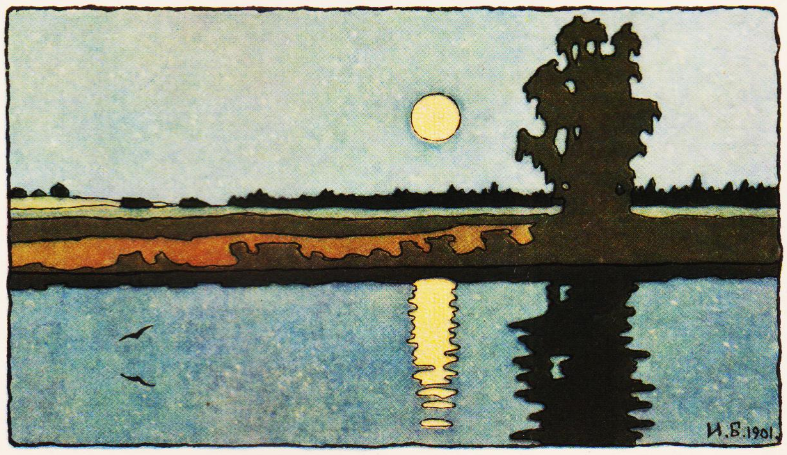
By and by Koshchei the Deathless turned his way homewards. On he rode, and his horse stumbled under him.

"Why do you stumble, you old bag of bones?" he asked.

"Tsarevich Ivan has carried off Marya Morevna!" the horse replied.

Koshchei the Deathless put his horse into a gallop and rode after Tsarevich Ivan. He caught up with him, but Tsarevich Ivan's horse struck him with its hoof so hard that he fell down dead.

Tsarevich Ivan and Marya Morevna were overjoyed and away they rode to their tsardom. And they lived there in peace for many a year and never had cause to shed a tear.



GOZNAK
MOSCOW
1979

МАРЬЯ МОРЕВНА
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На английском языке
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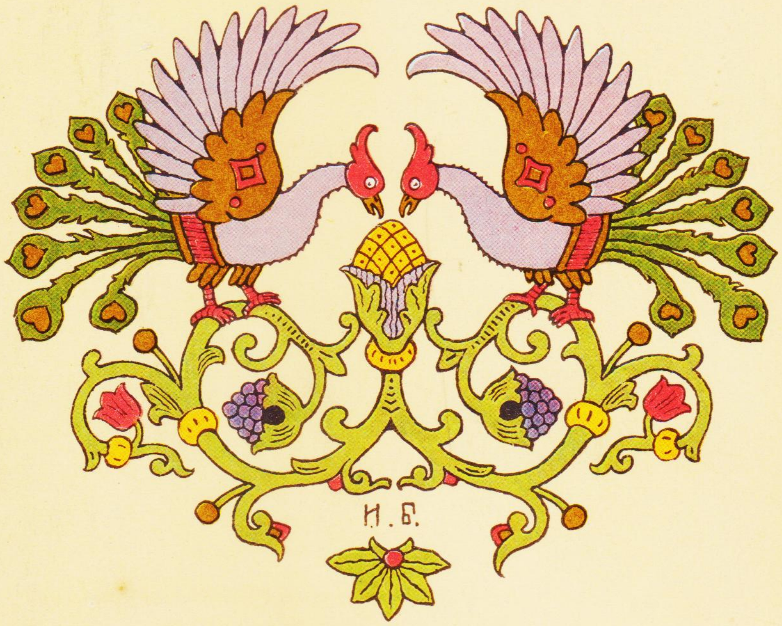
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